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Speaker Hastert To Lead Congressional Delegation Trip To Normandy

"We must never forget those who paid the ultimate price to defend the cause of liberty, and we must never forget the lessons of that just war"

(Washington D.C.) U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert announced today that he would lead a delegation of Members of the House of Representatives to England and France to participate in ceremonies paying tribute to the 60th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

Members include Speaker Hastert, John D. Dingell, Charles B. Rangel, Ralph Regula, James L. Oberstar, Ike Skelton, Thomas E. Petri, Lane Evans, John M. Spratt, Jr., Amo Houghton, Peter T. King, Robert W. Ney, John B. Shadegg, Mark E. Souder, Todd Tiahrt, Jerry Moran, John B. Larson, Randy Forbes, Jeff Miller. Former Minority Leader Robert H. Michel, a World War II veteran, will also join the delegation.

The delegation will stop first in Cambridge, England on June 4, to participate in a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the American Cemetery in Cambridge. Many of the paratroopers who participated in the D-Day left from Cambridge. On June 5, the delegation will visit Omaha Beach and attend a Mass celebrated by Francis Cardinal George, the Archbishop of Chicago. After the Mass, the delegation will go to St. Mere Eglise, to witness the members of the 82nd Airborne reenact the historic airdrop that started the D-day offensive. On June 6, the delegation will participate in the Bi-National Ceremony at Omaha Beach, with President Bush, and later tour Utah beach.

Speaker Hastert said: "I look forward to leading this very special Congressional delegation trip to Normandy to help pay tribute to the great sacrifices made by our allies and our soldiers in defense of freedom. Sixty years ago, most of Europe was still dominated by an evil Nazi regime, dominated by Adolph Hitler. Because of the great courage of ordinary Americans, who left Cambridge at night, parachuted behind the lines at St. Mere Eglise, or stormed the so-called Omaha and Utah beaches, and other locations in Normandy, Hitler's iron grip was broken, and after a long struggle, freedom again reigned in Western Europe."

"These brave warriors did not seek to conquer Europe. They sought only to liberate it. We must never forget those who paid the ultimate price to defend the cause of liberty, and we must never forget the lessons of that just war. Defending freedom is never easy, and it sometimes comes at a great cost."

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